

USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

**U.S. DRUG CONTROL POLICY'S SECOND AND
THIRD ORDER EFFECTS ON COLOMBIA: DESTABILIZING
DEMOCRACY AND FOSTERING NARCO-TERRORISM**

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This SRP is submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the Master of Strategic Studies Degree. The U.S. Army War College is accredited by the Commission on Higher Education of the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools, 3624 Market Street, Philadelphia, PA 19104, (215) 662-5606. The Commission on Higher Education is an institutional accrediting agency recognized by the U.S. Secretary of Education and the Council for Higher Education Accreditation.

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U.S. Army War College
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| Report Documentation Page | | | | Form Approved OMB No. 0704-0188 | |
|--|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|----------------------------|--|---------------------------------|
| Public reporting burden for the collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to Washington Headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports, 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington VA 22202-4302. Respondents should be aware that notwithstanding any other provision of law, no person shall be subject to a penalty for failing to comply with a collection of information if it does not display a currently valid OMB control number. | | | | | |
| 1. REPORT DATE 18 MAR 2005 | | 2. REPORT TYPE | | 3. DATES COVERED - | |
| 4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE U.S. Drug Control Policy's Second and Third Order Effects on Colombia Destabilizing Democracy and Fostering Narco-Terrorism | | | | 5a. CONTRACT NUMBER | |
| | | | | 5b. GRANT NUMBER | |
| | | | | 5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER | |
| 6. AUTHOR(S) Jeffrey McLean | | | | 5d. PROJECT NUMBER | |
| | | | | 5e. TASK NUMBER | |
| | | | | 5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER | |
| 7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) U.S. Army War College, Carlisle Barracks, Carlisle, PA, 17013-5050 | | | | 8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER | |
| 9. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) | | | | 10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S) | |
| | | | | 11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S) | |
| 12. DISTRIBUTION/AVAILABILITY STATEMENT Approved for public release; distribution unlimited | | | | | |
| 13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES | | | | | |
| 14. ABSTRACT See attached. | | | | | |
| 15. SUBJECT TERMS | | | | | |
| 16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF: | | | 17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT | 18. NUMBER OF PAGES 30 | 19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON |
| a. REPORT unclassified | b. ABSTRACT unclassified | c. THIS PAGE unclassified | | | |

ABSTRACT

AUTHOR: Captain Jeffrey E. McLean

TITLE: U.S. Drug control Policy's Second and Third Order Effects on Colombia :
Destabilizing Democracy and Fostering Narco-Terrorism

FORMAT: Strategy Research Project

DATE: 18 March 2005 PAGES: 30 CLASSIFICATION: Unclassified

United States drug control policy has historically focused its efforts on reducing domestic drug use and interdicting the illegal drug trade. Control of illegal drugs has remained an important national interest due to the large negative impact drugs have had on the American economy and due to the destabilizing effect drugs create within our society. Of all illegal drugs, cocaine poses the greatest threat to U.S. national security. Colombia produces or exports approximately ninety percent of all cocaine that enters the United States. Accordingly, this SRP will review the origins and genesis of U.S. national drug control policy and the impact our National Drug Control Strategy has had on Colombian cocaine trafficking. Furthermore, this SRP will examine the second and third order effects of U.S. drug control policy and the policy's potential to destabilize democracy and foster narco-terrorism in Colombia. Finding that U.S. drug control policy has been only marginally successful in achieving national objectives, the SRP will propose possible reasons for its ineffectiveness and recommend alternatives to improve policy.

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U.S. DRUG CONTROL POLICY'S SECOND AND THIRD ORDER EFFECTS ON COLOMBIA: DESTABILIZING DEMOCRACY AND FOSTERING NARCO-TERRORISM

If this (Andean Counter-Drug) initiative was targeted just at saving some of the 21,000 lives lost to drugs last year, it would be the right thing to do. But there is more to this bipartisan, multi-year initiative than even that noble aim. It is also a bulwark against the threat of terrorism in Colombia, Bolivia, Peru, Venezuela, Ecuador, and Panama. In short, it is a regional hemispheric and national security program, with direct implications for homeland security and for our well being here in the continental United States. One need only look as far as Haiti to see that drug money, and the instability that follows it, can be institutionally corrosive, to the point of breakdown. In Colombia, and elsewhere in the hemisphere, the link between drug money and terrorism is incontrovertible.¹

— Robert B. Charles
Assistant Secretary of State for International
Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (July 2004)

Over the last three decades United States drug control policy has aggressively and consistently targeted its efforts at countering the illegal drug trade and reducing domestic drug use. America's national drug control policy has been formulated based upon the significant and persistent threat that narcotics pose to national security. Illegal drugs have proven to be detrimental to the health of our citizens, the well-being of our social institutions and are increasingly deleterious to public safety. Because drug use has had such a large negative impact our economy and due to their destabilizing effects on society, counterdrug policy has received an enormous amount of attention in the national policy arena.

Of all illegal drugs, cocaine has historically posed the greatest threat to U.S. national security. According to the National Drug Intelligence Center's National Drug Threat Assessment of 2004, cocaine is "the primary" drug threat to the United States.² Cocaine is assessed as America's primary drug threat due to its relative availability, high demand, addictive nature, expanding markets and associated high rate of overdose.³ Furthermore, cocaine use is undisputedly linked with increased rates of crime. Accordingly, this paper's analysis will focus on U.S. drug policy efforts designed to address cocaine trafficking.

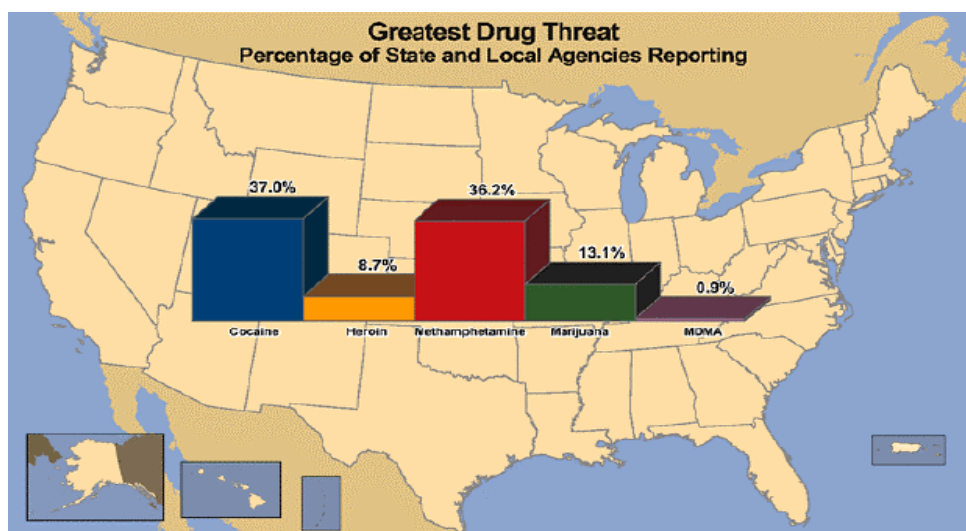


FIGURE 1: GREATEST DRUG THREAT

Most of the cocaine used in the United States originates from the Andean region countries of Colombia, Peru and Bolivia. The Department of State's report on Major Coca & Opium Producing Nations indicates that the majority (approximately 75 percent) of Andean region coca is grown in Colombia.⁴ This critical fact has attracted the focus of U.S. international drug control efforts. Accordingly, U.S. drug control policy has devoted numerous elements of national power and significant resources toward combating Colombian cocaine trafficking. With these facts in mind, this Strategy Research Project (SRP) will analyze U.S. drug control policy relative to Colombian cocaine trafficking. The paper's analysis will include a review of the origins of U.S. drug control policy, the components of U.S. international drug control strategy and the resultant second and third order effects on Colombia. Examination of U.S. drug control policy's second and third order effects on Colombia will demonstrate the policy's unintended consequences of destabilizing democracy and fostering narco-terrorism. Finding that U.S. national drug control policy and the National Drug Control Strategy (NDCS) have been only marginally successful in achieving national policy objectives, the paper will propose possible reasons for their ineffectiveness and recommend alternatives to improve policy.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF U.S. DRUG CONTROL EFFORTS

Of all the illegal drugs on the U.S. market, cocaine is the most potent stimulant of natural origin.⁵ Cocaine is produced through an extraction process performed on leaves of the coca plant. In the last half of the eighteenth century, pure cocaine was utilized in the United States for

medicinal purposes as a local anesthetic. At the turn of the nineteenth century, U.S. non-medical cocaine usage dramatically increased due to the expiration of a patent on the cocaine extraction process and the resultant increase in cocaine's public availability. Before 1906, cocaine was marketed in America without any legal controls. Products containing cocaine were frequently sold with claims of therapeutic benefit. In 1906 Congress made its first attempt to control cocaine use by passage of the Pure Food and Drug Act. This Act required drug and food manufacturers to state the content, strength, and purity of product ingredients. The Pure Food and Drug Act stopped the practice of including cocaine in drugs or food without the public's knowledge.⁶

The next major piece of legislation, targeted at drug control, occurred in 1915 with passage of the Harrison Narcotics Tax Act. The Harrison Act regulated and placed taxes on the sale of cocaine and other illicit drugs.⁷ The Harrison Act also banned non-medical use of cocaine, prohibited cocaine importation, imposed harsh criminal penalties on users and required a strict accounting of medical prescriptions for cocaine. The legislation proved seemingly effective. Noticeable reductions in U.S. cocaine availability and use were observed in the period between 1920 and 1960.⁸ During this time, law enforcement officials and medical providers seldom observed illegal cocaine use. Thus, during this period cocaine was not perceived as a significant threat to the public or national security.

Cocaine use and its associated problems began to noticeably rise in the United States during the 1960's. This fact caused Congress to pass additional drug control legislation. In 1970 the Comprehensive Drug Abuse Prevention and Control Act was signed into law. A second part of this Act was the Controlled Substance Act, which placed cocaine into a special category as a Schedule II substance. Schedule II substances have a high potential for abuse and may lead to severe psychological or physical dependence.⁹ These two key pieces of legislation echoed how seriously our government viewed the threat of illegal cocaine and symbolized the first true shots in the U.S. Government's self-proclaimed "War on Drugs."

NATIONAL DRUG CONTROL STRATEGY & LINKS TO NATIONAL SECURITY

Over thirty years ago President Nixon's Administration was the first to declare a "War on Drugs." In 1986, President Ronald Reagan broadened the fight against drugs by issuing a presidential directive declaring illegal drugs a "threat to national security."¹⁰ This presidential directive allowed U.S. military and intelligence assets to become actively involved in governmental drug control efforts.

Globalization of the world's economy has increasingly made cocaine a global product. It is estimated that the annual value of the illegal drug trade ranges between \$300-500 billion USD.¹¹

The exponential increase in world trade (tenfold in the past twenty years) has created a situation where international drug shipments are increasingly difficult to detect.¹² Despite this complex challenge, U.S. drug control policy has historically focused much of its efforts on the supply side of the drug war equation vice combating demand. This approach has been viewed as the best means to achieve national policy objectives.

| FUNCTIONAL AREAS ¹³ | FY 1996 Actual | FY 1997 Actual | FY 1998 Actual | FY 1999 Actual | FY 2000 Final | FY 2001 Final | FY 2002 Final | FY 2003 Final | FY 2004 Enacted | FY 2005 Request |
|---------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|------------------|-------------------|-------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Demand Reduction | | | | | | | | | | |
| Drug Abuse Treatment | \$1,928.7 | \$2,132.7 | \$1,947.4 | \$2,175.6 | \$2,241.6 | \$2,497.6 | \$2,544.7 | \$2,632.5 | \$2,775.1 | \$3,084.8 |
| Drug Abuse Prevention | 937.0 | 1,106.9 | 1,330.8 | 1,407.6 | 1,445.8 | 1,540.8 | 1,699.0 | 1,883.6 | 1,579.3 | 1,566.1 |
| Treatment Research | 282.6 | 309.6 | 322.2 | 373.1 | 421.6 | 489.0 | 547.6 | 611.4 | 616.7 | 612.5 |
| Prevention Research | 187.4 | 206.5 | 219.6 | 249.9 | 280.8 | 326.8 | 367.4 | 382.9 | 406.0 | 411.2 |
| Total Demand Reduction | 3,299.7 | 3,755.6 | 3,819.9 | 4,206.6 | 4,389.7 | 4,848.3 | 5,093.9 | 5,190.3 | 5,377.3 | 5,654.6 |
| Percentage | 51.6% | 49.8% | 50.1% | 45.7% | 44.3% | 46.4% | 46.8% | 45.5% | 44.3% | 43.6% |
| Domestic Law Enforcement | 1,624.1 | 1,836.3 | 1,937.5 | 2,100.6 | 2,238.3 | 2,462.8 | 2,794.7 | 2,954.1 | 3,080.5 | 3,261.1 |
| Percentage | 25.8% | 24.4% | 25.4% | 22.8% | 22.0% | 25.1% | 25.7% | 25.9% | 25.3% | 23.8% |
| Interdiction | 1,186.7 | 1,509.3 | 1,406.5 | 2,155.6 | 1,964.4 | 1,895.3 | 1,913.7 | 2,147.5 | 2,490.6 | 1,602.7 |
| Percentage | 17.6% | 20.4% | 18.4% | 24.4% | 19.8% | 19.3% | 17.6% | 18.8% | 20.6% | 19.6% |
| International | 243.6 | 389.9 | 464.0 | 746.3 | 1,019.2 | 607.3 | 1,084.5 | 1,166.1 | 1,133.9 | 1,049.3 |
| Percentage | 3.9% | 5.2% | 6.1% | 8.1% | 11.8% | 6.3% | 10.9% | 9.7% | 9.4% | 9.1% |
| TOTALS | \$6,274.1 | \$7,591.2 | \$7,628.0 | \$9,209.1 | \$10,151.5 | \$9,823.8 | \$10,891.9 | \$11,397.0 | \$12,082.3 | \$12,648.6 |

TABLE 1: HISTORICAL DRUG CONTROL FUNDING BY FUNCTION FY 1996-2005 (BUDGET AUTHORITY IN MILLIONS)

In March of 2004, President Bush's administration issued its NDCS, which set forth a balanced approach to reducing drug use among Americans. It did so by proposing a large array of drug control programs, treatment initiatives, and education efforts. The NDCS primarily focuses on three core priorities:

- Stopping use before it starts (demand).
- Healing America's drug users (demand).
- Disrupting the drug market (supply).

The planned fiscal year 2005 budget supporting accomplishment of the drug control strategy is \$12.6 billion USD. The strategy also set ambitious and specific two- and five-year performance goals. The plan's two-year goal is to lower the rate of drug use by 10 percent and its five-year goal is to lower the rate by 25 percent. Establishment of specific performance goals

in the Bush Administration's strategy is a marked change from the previous administration's drug strategy that utilized much more loosely defined goals such as "reduce usage." During the eight years of the Clinton Administration, a heavier emphasis was placed on reducing the domestic demand side of the drug equation than had been at any other time during the Drug War. At the time of release of the March 2004 NDCS, the Bush Administration reported that illicit drug use by teenagers had been reduced by 11 percent between 2001 and 2003.¹³ This apparent success lends some credibility to the Administration's tactic of utilizing a more balanced approach to the War on Drugs. By employing a balanced approach it will more evenly distribute policy focus and resources between efforts to reduce the supply side and the demand side of the drug war equation.

America's NDCS directly supports objectives defined in America's National Security Strategy (NSS). The current NSS (September 2002) highlights eight core national objectives. These core objectives are to champion aspirations for human dignity; strengthen alliances to defeat global terrorism; defuse regional conflicts; prevent our enemies from threatening us; ignite an era of global economic growth; open societies and build democracy; develop centers of global power and transform our national security institutions to meet the challenges of the twenty-first century.¹⁴ Arguably, the NDCS can demonstrate supporting linkages to all eight NSS core objectives. However, four of the objectives are directly supported by strategies defined in the NDCS.

In President Bush's opening comments to the NSS he states: "Defending our Nation against its enemies is the first and fundamental commitment of the Federal Government."¹⁵ This sentiment is aligned with the NSS's objective of "...preventing our enemies from threatening us." Illegal drugs and their distribution networks threaten our nation because they destroy our social institutions and national values. Drugs are also severely damaging to our citizens, detrimental to social stability and foster crime and violence. Furthermore, illegal drugs have a negative impact on our economy due to lost productivity and increased health and social welfare costs. "According to the Office of National Drug Control Policy, the societal cost of drug abuse was estimated to be \$160.7 billion dollars in 2000 and was projected to increase at a rate of 5.8 percent annually."¹⁶ The NDCS fully supports accomplishment of this NSS core objective.

The second NSS objective, supported by the NDCS, is the goal to "...open societies and build democracy." As mentioned previously, the drug trade unquestionably fosters violence and crime. This is true both domestically and internationally. In South America, drug producing nations like Colombia are fledgling democracies. Their governmental institutions are often tenuous and possess limited ability to exercise effective sovereignty over the state. By contrast, the drug trade is a powerful profit-based enterprise that produces large capital payoffs. This

atmosphere breeds keen competition among drug trafficking organizations which results in use of violent tactics to obtain or maintain market share. Drug trafficking organizations resist all governmental control and thus undermine its authority. Government executives, judiciary and public servants are often the targets of drug trafficking corruption and violence.¹⁷ These destabilizing factors run counter to the U.S. national objective of promoting democracy. Accordingly, U.S. drug control policy provides extensive military and foreign aid to help train and fortify governmental agencies that enhance security, protect sovereignty and maintain control within these fledgling democracies.

The third core national objective, supported by the NDCS, is the goal to “defuse regional conflicts.” Illegal drug production and its associated profits attract extremist groups looking to fund their causes. In many South American nations, multiple insurgent groups have become deeply entwined in the illegal drug trade. These rogue groups often fight each other over ideologies or to capture or maintain their share of the drug market. Furthermore, these groups commonly provide protection and support for drug traffickers.¹⁸ Their protection efforts are commonly directed toward the government as it attempts to control drug trafficking. As a result these groups act to destabilize democracy and create regional conflicts.

The fourth NSS objective, supported by the NDCS, is our nation’s desire to “...defeat global terrorism.” As discussed previously, the illegal drug trade attracts extremist groups eager to exploit the enterprise’s profits in order to further their ideological causes. Recent reports from the Joint Chiefs of Staff to a U.S. Congressional Committee indicate that radical Muslim fundamentalist cells of Hamas, Hezbollah and al-Qaeda are operating logistical support and other fronts in the tri-border area of South America.¹⁹ This fact clearly signals the possibility of future regional problems and indicates that U.S. national security interests should take action to prevent Mid-Eastern terrorist groups from establishing a foothold or funding source in South America. Likewise, existing South American insurgent groups regularly utilize terror tactics (fear, violence and kidnapping) to achieve their organizational objectives and to protect their interests in the illegal drug trade. The NDCS supports elimination of these terrorist groups.

INSTRUMENTS OF NATIONAL POWER IN THE DRUG WAR

As discussed above, the NDCS directly supports achievement of NSS objectives. In the Drug War, the U.S. government has applied multiple instruments of national power in its efforts to curtail domestic drug use. The key to success will undoubtedly be the use of a sustained and comprehensive mix of multiple instruments of national power. However, considerable debate exists regarding which instruments of power are most effective and enduring in the Drug War. While diplomatic, informational and economic instruments have all been employed, the military

instrument of power has frequently been the tool of choice. Historically, U.S. drug control policy has applied relatively equal amounts of funding toward reduction of demand and reduction of supply. Concerns also exist regarding the undesirable international second and third order effects of national drug policy. Lastly, much disagreement exists about the appropriate levels of resourcing and the resultant degree of emphasis applied to the various instruments of power.

MAJOR COMPONENTS OF INTERNATIONAL DRUG CONTROL POLICY

The below discussion will briefly highlight several international drug control strategy initiatives that have been targeted toward reducing the U.S. supply of cocaine. This discussion is by no means an attempt to ignore or minimize the benefits of domestic education, prevention and rehabilitation efforts targeted at reducing U.S. demand for cocaine.

ERADICATION OF COCAINE CROPS

Reduction of cocaine cultivation and production has been a long-standing goal of U.S. drug control policy. One of the primary means of accomplishing this goal in Colombia has been through a coca plant eradication program. In order to support eradication efforts, the U.S. Government provides Colombia with chemical herbicides, technical assistance, specialized equipment and spraying aircraft. Under an associated program, the U.S. Agency for International Development (AID) funds programs that promote economic growth and result in alternative employment opportunities for cocaine growers and producers. Likewise, USAID provides balance of payments support to Colombia to help replace the loss of foreign exchange due to reduced drug exports.²⁰ Coca eradication policy is also augmented through public affair campaigns in South America that publicize the dangers of drug abuse and drug trade violence.

One of the major detractors regarding coca eradication is the traffickers' ability to move production. This phenomenon is known as the "balloon effect." When eradication pressure is applied in one area, production simply pops up in another location. Over the past ten years, South America has demonstrated the balloon effect as eradication efforts were stepped up in Bolivia and Peru only to see cocaine production dramatically increase in Colombia. Similarly, over recent years, increased Colombian drug enforcement efforts resulting from U.S. sponsored Plan Colombia and the Andean Counterdrug Initiative have caused spill-over effects of the drug trafficking industry into Colombia's neighboring countries.

INTERDICTION AND LAW ENFORCEMENT

U.S. drug control policy initiatives also help host nations seize and destroy cocaine. This is done in hopes of interdicting the drug supply before it reaches the U.S. border. Related to this effort is the police strategy to disrupt criminal organizations involved in the illegal drug trade.

Targeting of these organizations' leadership and assets does this. U.S. policy also seeks extradition of drug traffickers to the United States for prosecution. In support of these efforts, U.S. policy provides training and advice to foreign law enforcement personnel and helps to equip them with counter-drug enforcement equipment.²¹

INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

The U.S. Department of State uses both bilateral and multilateral diplomatic efforts to persuade and help Colombia (and other source nations) to reduce or eliminate drug trafficking. To date most of these bilateral agreements and international conventions have been largely ineffective, mainly due to lack of strong local enforcement mechanisms. This fact has caused U.S. policy makers to favor bilateral agreements, as consensus is easier to obtain and incentives and assistance are easier to administer. While multi-national drug control agreements are the seemingly logical preferred course of action, they are often more difficult to obtain and administer.²²

SANCTIONS AND ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE

U.S. drug control strategy includes the threat of, or application of, sanctions. These sanctions include removal of U.S. foreign assistance, implementation of trade restrictions and possible curtailment of air transportation. U.S. law currently requires the President to annually submit to Congress a report listing each drug transiting or producing country that has "failed demonstrably" to meet its counter-narcotics obligations. These designated countries become largely ineligible for U.S. foreign assistance. Accordingly, these drug-producing nations are prodded to improve their drug control efforts. However, this penalty mechanism has seldom been utilized. Provisions in the law provide for a waiver to allow countries that have failed to meet counter-narcotics obligations to continue to receive U.S. aid if the President deems that providing the aid is in the best U.S. national interest.

Sanction efforts are supplemented by economic assistance programs. U.S. State Department's budget for fiscal year 2004 included approximately \$1.504 billion USD of foreign aid for Colombia, aimed at encouraging alternative economic development and reduction of illegal drug production.²³

INSTITUTION DEVELOPMENT

Another major piece of international drug control policy is efforts to help drug-producing nations develop more effective institutions to fight against drugs. These efforts include everything from enhancing governing ability to improving judicial and legal systems. Institutional development initiatives also target efforts at prevention of corruption and reduction of financial

crimes, as they undermine national organizations and further the agenda of drug traffickers. Strengthening these institutions and reducing crime are seen as means to help these nations better combat the drug trade.

U.S. DRUG POLICY'S SECOND AND THIRD ORDER EFFECTS ON COLOMBIA

Over the past three decades international drug control policy has primarily focused on eliminating Colombian cocaine supply in order to stem the flow of drugs into the United States. These policies have created extensive and far-reaching negative implications for source countries like Colombia. Drug policy has often produced severe internal hardships and social disruption within producer nations. In the past, source countries typically viewed illegal drugs as a consumer country problem. Today's realities and the many negative security consequences of the drug trade have forced source countries to acknowledge that illegal drugs are also a major national security concern for their own nation.²⁴

When analyzing the destabilizing effects of the drug trade on Colombia, it is helpful to envision them through an organizational framework developed by Professor Barry Buzan. Buzan is a Research Professor at the University of Westminster, London U.K. with an extensive background in international studies and political science issues. His framework helps to dissect and understand the negative implications and security risks created by the drug trade in Colombia. Buzan's "five dimensions of security" are:

- Political security - organizational stability and legitimacy of the state.
- Military security - ability of the state's military to enforce political will and protect sovereignty.
- Economic security - access to resources and markets needed to sustain quality-of-life and state power.
- Societal security - ability to reproduce traditional language, culture, religious and national identity and customs.
- Environmental security – environmental maintenance to support the human enterprise.²⁵

The following analysis will examine Colombian cocaine trade induced security risks. While examining these security risks, the review will highlight unintended consequences of U.S. policy. Furthermore, the discussion will demonstrate how these unintended consequences have further heightened source nation security risks and by extension influenced U.S. security.

COLOMBIAN COCAINE TRADE'S NEGATIVE IMPACT ON POLITICAL SECURITY

Production and trafficking of cocaine have precipitated numerous political security challenges for the Colombian government. One of the drug trade's negative fallouts has been a reduction in Colombian government international stature. This reduced stature could potentially hinder Colombia's chances of receiving foreign aid and could result in consumer nation trade sanctions as retribution for not more effectively controlling trafficking.²⁶ Furthermore, Colombia's past lack of effective drug control measures increased the likelihood of foreign government intervention (i.e. U.S. Plan Colombia Aid) in order to address the problem within Colombia.²⁷ Foreign intervention within Colombia holds the potential to further undermine the government's authority and challenge its sovereignty. Thankfully, recent developments under President Alvaro Uribe have established more aggressive and seemingly effective internal drug control measures.

While Colombia remains Latin America's second-oldest democracy,²⁸ its government remains relatively fragile. Colombia's anemic governmental institutions have made the government vulnerable to attack by criminal and insurgent groups who would like to change the balance of power in their favor. Many of these organizations utilize financial resources garnered through the drug trade to perform local acts of philanthropy in order to obtain the populace's loyalty and protection. Additionally, drug money has played a significant role in influencing the Colombian democratic process because political parties receive no governmental funding.²⁹ In combination, these factors work to undermine the government's authority and popular support in rural regions. As drug trafficking organizations have increased their local power, they have also utilized drug profits to become rural landowners. As landowners, traffickers have established themselves within legitimate associations of farmers and cattlemen. These associations wield significant influence in the Colombian political system and have allowed their agendas to be manipulated through connections with traffickers.³⁰

Unlike most modern nations, Colombia's primary national security risk comes from within the state vice from external entities. These dynamics are created by illegal groups regularly challenging the government's legitimacy and corrupting public employees and organizations. History is rife with examples of corruption within Colombia's police, military, judiciary and governmental institutions. Corruption of governmental officials and organizations, through bribery or threats of violence, degrades social and political institutional effectiveness while lessening public trust in government. Often times the very military and police forces that were responsible for enforcing Colombia's counterdrug laws were directly involved in corruption and human rights violations. Poor training and pay for these forces created a culture in which

corruption was acceptable. Recent professionalism initiatives have been beneficial and must be continued as a critical element to success in the drug war.

Both drug traffickers and insurgent groups attempt to develop autonomous power, in parallel with the government, through use of non-political, corrupt and violent tactics. Colombia's fragile governmental institutions allow criminal enterprises to thrive without significant risk of being checked by governmental control.³¹ Because of this fact, illegal groups have developed a vested interest in maintaining the government's weakened state or even pursuing the government's downfall and the subsequent void of authority.³² Tactics such as threats, kidnapping and assassination have commonly been utilized in attempts to paralyze the government.³³ Furthermore, drug traffickers, insurgents and paramilitary groups have developed a symbiotic relationship of convenience whereby insurgents and paramilitary provide protection for the drug trade. In return, these groups receive funding for their ideological causes. While these groups do not have common objectives, they have formed alliances to more effectively resist U.S. sponsored Colombian drug control efforts. Increased governmental pressure on insurgents means less pressure on traffickers and vice versa. Thus, these alliances are a prime example of a negative second order effect of U.S. drug control policy in Colombia. Without U.S. facilitated drug control initiatives within Colombia, it is questionable whether or not traffickers, insurgents and paramilitary groups would have so strongly collaborated and thus may have been easier to defeat individually.

COLOMBIAN COCAINE TRADE'S NEGATIVE IMPACT ON MILITARY SECURITY

One of the most significant challenges facing Colombia's military security is the rapid proliferation of modern weapon systems among drug trafficking and insurgent groups. Despite the negative consequences of corruption on Colombian forces, technology superiority has frequently been the deciding factor in favor of criminal elements. Advances in encrypted communications have made it more difficult for the Colombian military to exploit intelligence. Sophisticated black market weapons enable criminal organizations to inflict significant damage on government forces utilizing relatively small numbers of enemy forces. Furthermore, the overwhelming financial strength of the drug trade allows these illegal groups to procure both military and material superiority.³⁴ If Colombia's military is to have a reasonable chance of victory against these illegal groups, they must become equipped with modern weapon systems and receive professional training in effective tactics and operational procedures. Foreign military assistance programs, provided under the Andean Counterdrug Initiative, are making headway in this direction and should be continued.

COLOMBIAN COCAINE TRADE'S NEGATIVE IMPACT ON ECONOMIC SECURITY

Much like many addicted Americans, Colombia's economy became heavily dependent upon cocaine during the 1970s and 1980s.³⁵ Due to the drug trade's high pay-offs and declining prices for legitimate commodities, Colombia's economy shifted away from legitimate products like coffee and became overly dependent on the illegal export of cocaine. The cocaine trade business is volatile due to its dependency on market conditions such as climate, consumer demand and effectiveness of counterdrug operations. This volatility consistently places Colombia's economy at risk.

Reduced prices for legitimate commodities also drove declines in Colombia's export earnings, resulting in an increased national debt burden. With Colombia's worsening economic situation, many private industries shut down, causing significant national unemployment. Since then, the cocaine trade has acted as a relief mechanism providing employment but exacerbating Colombia's heavy reliance on a single illegal industry. The cocaine trade does produce export earnings and foreign currency in excess of legal sources, but its business is so transitory that it produces instability in the Colombian economy. The erratic nature of the cocaine business is typified by rapid transfers of large sums of money (without notice) which can destabilize local exchange rates and money supplies.³⁶ Furthermore, the large influx of drug money into Colombia's economy creates an underground network of black-marketing and money-laundering. This underground economy draws cash and activity away from legitimate businesses and reduces the Colombian government's tax base. Without the ability to properly tax a large portion of the economy's business (drug trafficking), the government loses revenue and weakens its ability to fight the war against drugs and insurgent groups. Additionally, with such a large piece of its economy underground, the Colombian government is unable to obtain accurate information regarding the true nature of the economy and thus cannot develop effective fiscal policies.³⁷ Much of the money-laundering activity in Colombia occurs through investments in high-priced real estate. This has driven up housing prices which has displaced many middle and lower class families. Real estate money laundering has also raised national interest rates by reducing the amount of cash available for lending to legitimate businesses.³⁸

U.S. drug control policy and its resultant pressure on cocaine traffickers have facilitated the creation of an extensive Colombian underground economy. Furthermore, the nature of Colombia's drug trade has concentrated wealth in the hands of the elite and furthered the economy's reliance on an unstable industry. U.S. drug control policy may be better served to devote its resources toward creation of alternative legal sources of employment for Colombians and expanding the legitimate Colombian economy.

COLOMBIAN COCAINE TRADE'S NEGATIVE IMPACT ON SOCIETAL SECURITY

One major unintended second order effect of U.S. drug control policy has been increased utilization of cocaine by Colombians. Cocaine addiction and abuse have become a significant social problem in Colombia. Increased cocaine utilization stems from the drug's greater availability and lower cost. Furthermore, Colombian society has maintained a lax attitude toward cocaine use which allows traffickers to develop local customers in order to consume surplus supply.³⁹ The success of U.S.-sponsored drug interdiction, while slowing the flow of cocaine into the United States, has increased incentives for traffickers to unload their product on the less-protected Colombian market.⁴⁰ In this fashion, U.S. drug control policy has shifted a portion of our drug abuse problem onto Colombia's population. As a result, Colombia suffers many of the same drug-related social ills as the United States. Colombia is experiencing rising medical and welfare costs, increased crime and elevated rates of infectious diseases.⁴¹ In fact, the social consequences of cocaine addiction in Colombia may be worse, as it has very few active drug treatment and rehabilitation programs.

Many of Colombia's traditional values and social structures are also threatened by the pervasive spread of drugs. In many parts of the society, drug traffickers are looked upon as heroes and the trade's easy money attracts young Colombians to join trafficking organizations. Drug-related violence and corruption are endemic to Colombia and general social norms and respect for law have broken down. These conditions have fostered social chaos and increased petty crime. In order to restore societal security, U.S. drug policy needs to dramatically increase foreign assistance to enhance Colombia's civil authority and law enforcement capability.

COLOMBIAN COCAINE TRADE'S NEGATIVE IMPACT ON ENVIRONMENTAL SECURITY

Cocaine cultivation and production methods have negatively impacted Colombia's environment. Coca is normally grown in remote, ecologically pristine regions. In these regions, the use of slash and burn techniques to clear land has increased erosion and depleted forests. Pressure on drug producers, as a result of U.S. drug control policy, has forced traffickers to frequently move their operations in order to evade law enforcement. These constant movements result in multiplication of environmental damage as traffickers regularly clear new areas for cultivation.⁴² The escalation of environmental damage is a second order negative consequence of U.S. drug control policy.

When processing cocaine in their remote laboratories, drug traffickers routinely dump large amounts of precursor chemicals.⁴³ This dumping, coupled with U.S. sponsored coca eradication spraying programs, has chemically polluted Colombia's water supply.⁴⁴ Furthermore, U.S. funded spraying initiatives to eradicate coca cause additional environmental damage by

destroying all types of foliage. Removal of all vegetation increases soil erosion, silt runoff and pollution of water ecosystems. Water pollution, soil erosion and deforestation are all additional second and third order effects of U.S. drug control policy on Colombia.

SUMMARY

The effects of cocaine trafficking and abuse on U.S. society are severe and extensive. More than any other illegal narcotic, cocaine has negatively impacted our economy and social systems. Cocaine use has been directly linked to increased rates of crime and violence, lost productivity, rising medical and welfare costs and elevated rates of infectious diseases. Accordingly, the U.S. government views cocaine as a *threat to our citizens and society* and as such is managed as an *important national interest*. Over the past three decades, considerable amounts of U.S. international policy attention and financial resources have been targeted at stemming the flow of cocaine from Colombia. Despite these efforts, U.S. policy initiatives have been unable to fully achieve counterdrug objectives in Colombia. Therefore, U.S. drug control policy requires reorientation in order to improve its effectiveness.

The detrimental effects of cocaine trafficking on Colombian society have also been significant and far reaching. Colombia's cocaine trade has destabilized its government, created economic instability, disproportionately concentrated wealth, fostered terrorism, increased corruption, encouraged tax evasion and produced an extensive underground economy.⁴⁵ Furthermore, America's counterdrug policy in Colombia has unintentionally added insult to injury by causing second and third order negative consequences. Numerous U.S.-sponsored counterdrug initiatives like coca eradication have encouraged undesirable adversary alliances, disrupted local economies and removed primary sources of income for rural workers. In this manner U.S. policy has exacerbated Colombia's unemployment and poverty. Given this fact, it is understandable how U.S. drug control policy in Colombia has further increased anti-government sentiment and encouraged support for drug traffickers and insurgent groups in their struggle against the government. These factors have weakened the government's ability to combat drugs and effectively address other pressing social problems. Unfortunately, many of U.S. policy's negative consequences for Colombia may be unavoidable in pursuit of U.S. policy objectives. However, a more extensive, balanced and sustained approach toward U.S. counterdrug goals could be far more effective in producing favorable and enduring outcomes.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

In the twenty-year period between 1981 and 2001, the United States spent \$8.57 billion USD on international drug control efforts. Despite this large expenditure of resources, South American cocaine production increased from an estimated 155 tons to 870 tons per year during

the same time frame.⁴⁶ Given this trend, it is reasonable to assess that U.S. policy for control of Colombian cocaine trafficking has been at best marginally effective. Policy change is needed to create long-term changes within Colombia which will support counterdrug goals.

Examination of Colombia's drug induced security risks make it seem intuitive that the Colombian government would independently pursue an aggressive counterdrug policy. However, to do so creates additional internal threats to the country's government, economy and social systems. In effect, Colombia's government is placed in the difficult position of having to carefully balance divergent social, economic and security requirements while attempting not to further inflame anti-government movements by the populace, drug traffickers and insurgents. This is exactly why appropriate application of U.S. counterdrug policy is such a difficult task and so essential to Colombia's success in the drug war.

In order for U.S. efforts to be successful in the Drug War, a dramatic change in national policy priority is necessary. Congress must increase drug control funding in order to have any hope of countering the estimated \$375 billion USD of illegal drug money laundered each year.⁴⁷ Significantly more counterdrug resources are needed in order to discourage individuals involved in the cocaine trade from attempting to pursue the enterprise's high pay-offs.

Increases in counterdrug funding should be allocated in a much more balanced approach. Washington should greatly enhance USAID funding for Andean Region economic development and enhanced employment generation initiatives. These programs must be part of a wide area rural development strategy that encourages outside investment, rural infrastructure improvement and land reforms.

Key to the success of these foreign aid initiatives will be the Colombian economy's ability to adapt and provide substitute income sources to sustain those currently dependent on drug production. U.S. should apply influence in the international market to broker trade agreements and financial arrangements which favor Colombia's economic advancement. The World Bank and International Monetary Fund should establish financial programs that assist Colombia's growth and reward verified reductions in drug production. Furthermore, U.S. policy should support robust foreign aid to help energize Colombia's economy. This aid should be procured multilaterally with assistance coming from numerous industrialized nations that will benefit most from reductions in illegal drug production. A reasonable metric for calculating individual national responsibility could be based upon annual cocaine consumption. Of the roughly 700 metric tons of cocaine produced in Colombia annually, the U.S. consumes 250 metric tons, European nations 150 metric tons and Brazil 50 metric tons.⁴⁸ Thus, the United States, Europe and Brazil should provide the lion's share of foreign assistance. The aid program should be designed to promote economic development and encourage alternative crops and industrial occupations for

displaced drug producers. This plan must be executed carefully, as it possesses potential to create both economic and political crisis in Colombia. However, if applied carefully and comprehensively over the long-term, it will enhance drug control policy effectiveness and achieve U.S. national drug control objectives.

Over the past decade, U.S. counterdrug policy has increasingly utilized its resources to bolster Colombian interdiction capabilities as the primary means for combating the cocaine trade. This approach was taken in hopes that stronger military and police forces would enable the government to gain authoritative territorial control. Plan Colombia primarily focused its foreign aid resources on providing enhanced equipment and training for military and law enforcement agencies. Likewise the follow-on Andean Counterdrug Initiative strengthened Colombian military capability while taking a somewhat more balanced approach of increasing soft-side funding and regionally expanding assistance.⁴⁹ Soft-side funding was slightly increased in an attempt to expand regional development and to enhance alternative crop sources. However, this modest shift in funding, away from militarization efforts, was principally done for political reasons. First, to combat criticism that U.S. policy was too narrowly focused on military means and secondly in order to address the spill-over effect of drug trafficking into Colombia's neighboring countries as a result of military pressure on traffickers. U.S. policy should absolutely continue to fully support enhancements in Colombian military and law enforcement capabilities. However, future policy should also more seriously address and fund soft-side initiatives within Colombia designed to remove the cocaine trade's causal factors.

Furthermore, we must reorient our old fragmented and bilateral drug control policies with more comprehensive and multilateral plans. We can greatly improve our counterdrug policy by insisting on and accepting nothing less than a truly "regional approach" to the problem. Bilateral drug control efforts have far too often resulted in a shifting of drug production into neighboring countries or regions. By developing a regional multilateral drug control strategy, the U.S. and its allies will better be able to facilitate a broad far-reaching effort to reduce drug production throughout the Andean Region.

Despite the negative environmental and economic implications of coca eradication, current evidence indicates that these programs remain the safest, most cost effective and efficient means of reducing the coca supply.⁵⁰ Accordingly, U.S. policy should stay the course of support for coca eradication and incrementally expand long-term eradication efforts. Close evaluation and monitoring of the herbicides utilized and spraying techniques should be continued to ensure consistent compliance within EPA standards in order to minimize potential environmental impact. Maintaining the longevity of the coca eradication program will also be essential to preclude opportunistic farmers from replanting and returning to coca cultivation.

Economics dictate that eradication can't be effective if local farmers have no other employment opportunities. Therefore, eradication efforts should be designed as an integral piece of a larger counterdrug initiative that includes expanded efforts to encourage alternative development in rural drug producing areas. Long-term eradication efforts coupled with increased law enforcement and drug interdiction programs throughout the Andean Region will produce positive results.

One of the major shortfalls of past U.S. drug control policy has been its failure to fully recognize the nexus between Colombian cocaine traffickers, insurgents and paramilitary groups. If Colombia is to win its war on drugs, it must first establish firm authoritative control of its territory. In many portions of the country, insurgent groups are still able to operate freely, unfettered by government control. These groups draw strength from drug profits and employ terror tactics to secure their objectives and resist governmental authority. In order to fully establish its legitimacy, the Colombian government must confront these groups and assert its authority by enforcing the rule of law throughout its entire territory. When it does so, the government will then be able to begin the long process of bolstering rural economies, building infrastructure and developing stronger social institutions. Once rural regions are secure and social improvements have begun, the local populace will finally begin to fully support the government and law enforcement efforts. This in turn will secure the government's legitimacy and strengthen its ability to continue efforts in the war on drugs. Accordingly, U.S. policy should continue to vigorously support training, equipping and advisement of Colombian military and law enforcement forces in order to enhance their effectiveness and professionalism.

Colombia requires professional forces that are well-trained and equipped in order to effectively increase law enforcement and drug interdiction efforts. Continued expansion and improvement of Colombia's military and law enforcement capabilities will provide dual benefit as they will also foster protection of Colombia's democracy by enabling the government to better combat insurgents. U.S. policy should vigorously encourage Colombian efforts to combat insurgency as it presents a major roadblock to combating drugs. Past errors in policy limited utilization of U.S. foreign aid to prosecution of counterdrug initiatives only. Political apprehension prevented the Colombian government from being able to effectively attack one of the drug war's most systemic problems: "the insurgents." Thankfully, the tragic events of September 11th 2001 heightened awareness of the need for U.S. policy change in order to allow pursuit of these terrorist organizations. In 2003, the Department of State redesignated the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), the National Liberation Army (ELN), and the United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia (AUC) as Foreign Terrorist Organizations. This redesignation, in conjunction with the King Pin Act's designation of the FARC and AUC as

“significant foreign drug traffickers,” opened the door for their full scale prosecution via ACI programs. The U.S. government should now significantly broaden the scope of our military aid and assistance to Colombia with clear-cut guidance that resources should be fully utilized to regain territorial control so that law enforcement and effective drug control efforts can be exercised within Colombia.

CONCLUSION

For more than thirty years U.S. drug control policy in Colombia has optimistically employed diplomatic, informational, military and economic means in order to stem the northern flow of cocaine. Despite these efforts, the cocaine trade has been able to persist and flourish. It is time to seriously reevaluate U.S. drug control policy and make the difficult adjustments that are needed to eliminate the causal factors of trafficking. Furthermore, U.S. policy should further fortify Colombia’s economy and governmental institutions. The cocaine trade has been able to persevere because the drug war has only been a limited war. If the U.S. truly desires victory in this protracted fight it must adopt a total war approach. Increased counterdrug resources are required and much more emphasis must be placed on soft-side initiatives within Colombia. Creation of a stable democratic Colombian government that is able to provide security and encourage free market enterprise is the best avenue to victory. U.S. policy should do all it can to help Colombia achieve those goals.

U.S. drug control policy for Colombia must also never again make distinctions between counterinsurgency and counterdrug initiatives. Counterinsurgency and counterdrug efforts are categorically linked as drug traffickers and guerrillas have formed symbiotic relationships and possess intertwined networks of support. These networks must be addressed with full recognition of their integral linkages and relationships. Insurgent groups and paramilitary organizations must be brought to justice or eliminated in conjunction with the full scale pursuit of drug traffickers. If U.S. drug control policy were to return to its past methodology of only addressing the narcotics trafficking side of the Colombian nexus, it is doomed to prolong a battle that guarantees continued waste of valuable national resources.

WORD COUNT= 7023

ENDNOTES

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⁴ *Ibid.*, 3.

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⁶ Erowid, "Coca Timeline," available from <http://www.erowid.org/plants/coca/coca_timeline.php3>; Internet; accessed 24 September 2004, 1.

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¹² Joshua S. Krasna, "Narcotics and the National Security of Producer States," *The Journal of Conflict Studies* 16 (Fall 1997): 2.

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²⁰ Raphael Pearl, *Drug Control: International Policy and Approaches*, Washington D.C.: Congressional Research Service, The Library of Congress, Foreign Affairs, Defense, and Trade Division, updated 13 May 2004), CRS-3.

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³¹ Krasna, 4.

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³⁷ Ibid.,14.

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³⁹ Ibid., 15.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

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⁴² Ibid., 16.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Tullis LaMond, *Unintended Consequences, Illegal Drugs and Drug Policies in Nine Countries* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers Inc., 1995), 154.

⁴⁶ Pearl, CRS-6.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Bush, *National Drug Control Strategy*, 33.

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